

Thank you Regina. Welcome. Thank you, everyone, for coming.

What a beautiful bridge. I know Regina has thanked you. I want to add my thanks, and congratulations, to City staff in our Department of Transportation, to the architects and contractors, to the artist, who did this beautiful public art. This bridge is something Tucsonans can take pride in.

Today is another milestone in the completion of the modern streetcar route, linking the University of Arizona Health Sciences Center, BIO5, the University, Main Gate Square, 4th Avenue, downtown and the west side.

Where we're at today is the final link in that chain: connecting downtown to the west side.

Here, at the Santa Cruz River, we're at the oldest part of our city, continuously inhabited for over 4,000 years. And we're at the newest part of our city, the Luis Gutierrez Bridge – across the way, Sentinel Plaza Apartments and Mercado San Agustin.

The best cities have always grown this way – respecting and cherishing their heritage, but not being afraid to try something new. Tucson's dedication to solar, to LEED-certified construction – to the modern streetcar itself – mean we're NOT afraid to do things a little differently. We know that's how we move ahead.

A thriving downtown is the heart of any city. Without a downtown that's a cultural and economic center, it's difficult to attract new businesses to your region. I want to make sure that Tucson businesses can recruit and retain the best employees – employees who, like me, don't want to live anywhere other than Tucson. A thriving downtown – a walkable, bikeable downtown, with access to transit – is a big part of making that happen.

The streetcar will help. 100,000 people live within a half mile of the route. I gave you the route earlier, using place names. But I could just as well have put it this way. The streetcar will link science and technology, with culture and history. This is my vision for Tucson – one I think many of us share.

During construction, the modern streetcar has created hundreds of local jobs. When complete, it's estimated that there'll be almost 1500 long-term jobs related to the streetcar – reflecting increased commercial activity along the route.

This bridge will be a vital part of the streetcar line. And its bike path and pedestrian walkway are just as important. They offer Tucsonans ways to stay active and fit – ways to meet neighbors and enjoy the outdoors.

It's a lot for one bridge to tie together. Downtown and the west side. Health and fitness. Neighbors and neighborhoods. Our past and our future. From what I see today, the Luis Gutierrez Bridge is up to the task. Congratulations.